

**#21
\$10**

LadyLike
magazine
ADULTS ONLY



**OUR FIRST
CANADIAN**

*Dianne Richard
and also
Keli Grey*

THE PROBLEM
CHAPTER 3

**THE DEATH OF
GENDER**

*and...
lots of photos*

*Dianne
Richard*

Roberts' Ramblings

66 A major milestone is about to take place in the transgender community. For the first time, ever, anywhere, five major educational transgender organizations are going to work together on a single project. The event is the annual conference for the National Association of Social Workers. The date is October 19-22, 1994. The location is Nashville, Tenn. The project is an exhibition booth for the Transgender Community.

The organizations involved in this major undertaking are (in alphabetical order) the American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), the International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), the Outreach Institute for Gender Studies, The Renaissance Educationa Association, Inc., and the Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess). A special brochure is in development that will explain the mission and services of the five groups. All five are not-for-profits, and three are non-profit 501[c][3] tax-exempt. Two are membership-based organizations with chapters and affiliates, and three are service/information oriented.

Why is this project so important? First, many folks just discovering their transgender nature will naturally seek the help of a professional. Not everyone is lucky enough to have a nationally recognized gender therapist in their locale. Many people seek out services provided by the county or the state. Invariably, these counselors are Social Workers. Thus, the Social Workers are the first contact for many of our sisters and brothers. It makes a lot of sense then to attend the Social Workers' conference to educate them about gender issues and to let them know what resources we can offer them to pass on to clients.

But perhaps more important than what we're doing for the Social Workers is what we're doing for ourselves. We're working together with a common goal. There are no hidden agendas. We want to maximize our impact on the Social Workers and we want them to know there is a community of transgendered people that can assist them in their work.

Sure, some of these organizations have worked in pairs before. Renaissance has cooperated in projects with IFGE, AEGIS, Outreach and Tri-Ess. But, never have all five worked together before.

What a great idea! And the credit for suggesting it goes to Jane Ellen Fairfax, the Chair of the board of Tri-Ess. Each of the boards of the five organizations have endorsed the project, but, more importantly, they pledged the funds to make it happen. I applaud all of the directors of these organizations for setting aside philosophical and political differences for the common good of the community.

With the succesful completion of this project, it is very likely we will see more projects like this in the future, perhaps with expanded participation from organizations like the International Conference of Transgender Law & Employment (ICTLEP), and the Educational TV Channel (ETVC), both of which are non-profit, tax-exempt.

And now a word for a sponsor...

Last issue I told you about the Community Film Fund set up by the Renaissance Education Association in support of a feature length documentary film about the transgender community. I'm going to be reminding you every issue about the project, so get used to it. They really need your help in the form of tax-deductible donations. Any amount will be deeply appreciated from \$5 to \$50 to \$500 or \$5000. (Hey, for \$5000, they'll make you an Executive Producer and you'll "do" lunch.) Seriously, I'm supporting the project 110%, and many other people in Renaissance have made similar commitments. Please help.

Send your contributions to the Renaissance Community Film Fund, PO Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406 or call 610•630•1437 fro more information.

JoAnn Roberts '99

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Dianne Richard



Keli Grey

Cover Credits: Dianne Richard

Dianne Richard



LadyLike's Profile

NAME: Dianne Richard

AGE: 45

PROFESSION: Engineer

RESIDENCE: Toronto, Canada

HEIGHT: 5' 9"

WEIGHT: 175#

MEASUREMENTS: Dress Size 16/18

SHOE SIZE: 11

FAVORITE THINGS:

SHOE STYLE: Pumps – but shoes are shoes, the more the merrier.

PERFUME: Chloe; just discovered Tsror

MOVIE: 2001, Die Hard, Alien, Ground Hog Day, Somewhere In Time, Princess Bride

MUSIC: All kinds except twangy country

STYLES: Soft & feminine styles, tailored suits

PLACE: Home (without the kids)

TURN-ONS: Live theatre, Star Trek, my wife, quality lingerie, preparing gourmet meals.

TURN-OFFS: Prejudice. Anyone who thinks 45 is "too old" and 23 is "too young." Stupidity.

FANTASY: To be a female for a month and play a female role on stage.

LadyLike: At this point in time, your partner is very supportive of your crossdressing activities (an enviable trait in a partner), but was she always supportive?

Dianne Richard: In the early days of discovery we had no understanding, no sources of information and, therefore, no support for the activity. Fortunately, however, my wife has always been very supportive of *me*. This respect allowed her to overcome the initial feelings of betrayal, deceit and untruth. My wife had taken the car to work on that momentous Thursday in April, 1973. I had been trying to find a new hiding place for my ever-expanding wardrobe and had left a large bag of clothing in the trunk of the car. I don't believe I ever worried about her discovering it as there was no need for her to open the truck.

As fate would have it, the car, then nearing the end of its life, needed a quart of oil. My wife decided to 'help' me out and add the oil. Trunk opened, discovery made, a phone call placed to my office and we met for lunch, talk and tears.

We called our situation THE PROBLEM. This discovery



Dianne Richard

had tainted the special intimacy, physical, mental and emotional, that we shared. To some degree, Dianne posed as much of a threat to my wife as any adulterous relationship would have. Also, the lack of understanding of the situation, its motivation and its relationship to our family prompted the inevitable discussion of separation for the betterment of all and the 'protection' of our daughter. Fortunately, our deep love for each other prevailed and we were able to talk about this PROBLEM like we had other hurdles in our relationship. The usual misconceptions of gay, weird and perverted prompted the discussions about separation. Did I really want to be with her? Was I gay? Was this weird, un-conventional activity the 'proper' environment to bring up our daughter? Why did I do it?

Leaving my wife and daughter was not even a consideration for me. Yes, I wanted her in my life, however, I didn't know the answers to the other questions? We talked a lot that first month. It seemed like we never stopped. I was sorry for not telling her before we were married yet in a way it was good that I hadn't. During our 4 year court-

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ship, 2 year engagement and 3 year marriage, my wife had gotten to know me, the *me* inside. The fact that cross-dressing had been hidden from her didn't alter the fact that it was still an integral part of the *me* she had fallen in love with. Being able to talk allowed me the opportunity to point this out and convince her that I had not changed nor was I any different from the person she had always known. Not knowing what else to do we formed a "50 Year Plan" to eliminate crossdressing from our lives. It would have been good if we had known of others we could turn to, yet such a thought is a Catch 22. If we had known others, then the PROBLEM wouldn't have been a problem. I would love the opportunity now to talk with couples who have just made the discovery and help them through this initial time. It would be rewarding to be the conduit to understanding for some.

LL: What happened to your "50 Year Plan?"

DR: Our "50 Year Plan" was nothing more than comic relief in the midst of a very tense time, but it amazes me that 20 of those 50 years have passed. I'm not sure if the adage 'time heals all wounds' is applicable here but it sure goes a long way to take off the sharp edges. The wardrobe that was discovered in April, 1973 disappeared a couple of months later (my choice as a concession to our talks).

Times continued on quietly. THE PROBLEM was always there in our thoughts but only spoken of from time to time. The feelings lay mostly dormant until the early 80's. Over those 7 years my "other half" slept quietly most of the time. There were a few times when I borrowed an occasional garment and re-experienced the thrill of dressing, but this was always done when I was absolutely sure I would be alone.

I'm not completely sure what started the discussions again. Perhaps it was a number of things. Nights lying in bed sharing fun stories in *Penthouse FORUM* (some about crossdressing). Tension at home about bills, kids (by then we had 2), sex and career. All these things and more prompted many talks and some of those talks involved THE PROBLEM. It was interesting that my wife's attitude about it had altered. Not that she was more accepting of it but she was more willing to discuss it. It was very difficult trying to explain how I felt about it.

Over time my feelings about crossdressing had changed as well. When I was young it provided a thrill, a sexual rush if you will but as I matured and came to understand THE PROBLEM and myself more I realized how much it was an inner part of me. Crossdressing became comfortable, it no longer had that BIG rush but was an outward manifestation of something deep inside me.



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More about that later. The big turn around finally came the day my wife concluded Dianne was not a threat to our relationship nor was it a slight to her femininity. She was still the same wonderful sexy woman that I made love to frequently and that hadn't changed just because she now knew of my crossdressing.

In fact when she finally suggested that I dress again it opened up a whole new world to us. We began to share new things. We would shop together (not crossdressed) and discuss various fashions. We used initials to describe whether we felt a dress, skirt or blouse was good for her or me. We both began to learn more about make up. We even exchange a lot of clothing.

Our "50 Year Plan" continues but in a different way. I guess it was always about respecting each other and being able to talk and compromise. That still exists and has made our lives happy and interwoven. Elimination is not a question anymore because we've found a balance to our lives. Crossdressing is an inherent part of our lives but not our only focus. By not letting it run away with itself we have both used it to enhance our relationship.

LL: How did you find out about the TV/TS community, and what was your first experience?

DR: December 7, 1990, my wife and I were sitting in



our car in the driveway of complete strangers. We had talked to this couple on the telephone and had arranged to meet at their home for the weekend. This would be our first experience sharing our 'secret' with anyone face to face. It had been a few months earlier that I had discovered an advertisement for the Monarch Social Club. MSC is based in a small community 90 minutes north of Toronto. I placed a phone call to the number that appeared with the ad and was connected with a business that catered to many alternative lifestyles, crossdressing included. While on a business trip, I decided to 'check out' this organization. With great trepidation I wandered into the shop. I looked around... now what? I was just about to leave when the proprietor, a large, straight talking woman, asked me point blank if I was a crossdresser. I swallowed hard, counted to three as my mind raced for an answer and after an eternity I heard 'YES' slipping from my mouth. My immediate thought was "now I've done it... what's going to happen to me." As it turned out the answer was the very one the woman had expected. She took me on a tour of the place, talked very frankly about crossdressing, and asked if I was interested in joining MSC. The few hours worth of talk and information I received convinced me that the PROBLEM was not unique to me. My world had expanded and would never be the same.



again, so I joined. We began to realize the crossdressing community was large, very widespread and made up of people just like us.

Through the MSC we found a couple who were looking for other couples to get together for dinner and conversation. This sounded too good to be true. It's strange now to look back at the double standard we held. We were looking for others to accept us and my crossdressing as normal, yet we wondered at the 'real' motive of this couple. It turned out to be just what it seemed. We have never been afraid of meeting new people, so knocking on the door, making ourselves comfortable in the home of strangers and making small talk came easy. When the subject changed to crossdressing we knew we had reached the point of no return. Actually, the people were so open and mature about it that conversation was very easy. That first evening brought down many barriers.

The second hurdle presented itself when it was time to get changed. What would they think of me? Would there be silent giggles? Could I actually bring myself to leave the bathroom? Our hosts had invited other crossdressers for that first evening and that meant we had more strangers to deal with. We have come to realize since everyone holds the same 'secret' it's not a big deal to share it and experience it... but that first night was a bit disconcerting. It's

strange that little of the talk was centered on crossdressing. It was learning about each others lives outside of crossdressing. The crossdressing talk that did occur reaffirmed that these people had a history similar to ours. This was a theme I would hear over and over again as we met more new friends. By the end of the weekend, we were planning to have the couple to our place the first opportunity that the children could be safely sent away for the weekend. Others we met on that weekend, and on subsequent evenings, provided us with a base of close friends in the crossdressing community. These contacts allowed us to expand our reach further and every corner we turned we discovered that the world had a new and more distant horizon as well as more and more friends to embrace.

LL: It was about this time you picked the name Dianne. How did you arrive at that name?

DR: Having gotten into computers in the early 80's I soon discovered the wonderful world of BBSing (electronic bulletin boards). On one of the boards I frequented there were ongoing Star Trek role playing games. As an extension of my female side, I chose to play these games as a female human character. I had three different names for three different characters, Danielle, Dianne and Alexandra. The day I decided to join MSC I was asked for a



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femme name. I had never considered one before, outside the role playing games. Many thoughts went into answering that request for a name. This would be a name I would have to live with. I am not one to change names with the shift in the wind. Like my male name, this name would become ME. My first reaction was to use Danielle. But Danielle had such a full life and history deeply rooted in the world of the original *Star Trek* that I couldn't use the name for any reality based existence. I finally decided on Dianne. I could give up this underdeveloped character for a new existence.

Over the years my wife has been able to call me Dianne among our closest CD friends; it is interchangeable with my male name. We both truly feel that there is little distinction between either side of my persona and they both make up what is genuinely *me*. Between my wife and me, Dianne's name is spoken in a pseudo first/third person reality. The name is not the existence, the person is, and she (Dianne) is as much a part of me as I am a part of her as my hands, hair, eyes and feet are both a part of us.

LL: You mentioned that the only part of Dianne that is ever "in" or "out" of "the box" (as you call it) is the physical portion. Explain that.

DR: My philosophy of life, and attitude toward people



and things around me is the same regardless of the physical demeanour. My being is a composite of both my male and female attributes working in unison. I'm really not sure if I can express it any better than that. Perhaps 'physically' Dianne has always been hidden away inside me and never seen until this more recent part of my life. But I am positive that 'she' has always been a part of me. It's said that all of us have feminine and masculine traits to our personalities. I have not let the expected and accepted social standards of what is masculine, force me into denying the feminine parts of who I am. I have found that those female parts have served me very well in my dealings with others. They have added an entire dimension to my persona that I imagine most males just cast away. Whether my physical appearance is male or female, the female facets have added resources that I use in my social dealings, in my business dealings and in my family life dealings . I have talked and read about so many cross dressers who divide themselves in male and female, never permitting the two to cross or intermingle. What a loss! What a waste! I am not complete with only my male components nor am I complete with just my female qualities. I am a one person and not two. I know who I am, what I am and enjoy life as ME whether that ME appears in shirt and jeans with a two day growth of beard or in a flowing

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evening party dress with impeccable make up. As an observer you may see Dianne's physically only from time to time, but whenever you talk to me you are talking to her because the 'physical' Dianne is not real. Its all inside.

LL: You and your wife have developed a set of guidelines for Dianne. Care to share them?

DR: The guidelines are pretty much common sense. They evolved over the years and vary slightly with circumstance. The development of the parameters grew from the same ability to talk openly that kept us together in those early days. If something bothers my wife, she decides whether it's a small inconvenience that she will live with or if it's a major concern. If it's significant, we discuss it. This same philosophy works when I approach her. We had a number of talks about specific things though. We both agree that crossdressing is something WE share. We do not want to burden our children with it. They have their own life concerns. This was much more of a concern when they were smaller. Yet even as young adults, we do not wish to thrust it upon them. We have always maintained an honest approach with our children. We always give straight answers to straight questions. However, until this particular straight question is asked about crossdressing, we will keep the secret to ourselves.

There are certain places that we go as husband and wife that Dianne, by definition, is not permitted to go. We have our 'weekend away' places that are non-dress options. The nearby mall is another taboo. My female appearance masks my male-self well enough for me to walk by all but our closest friends, but place my wife beside me and everyone would instantly recognize me.

Balance seems to be the underlying thread to our guidelines. I enjoy my "dress" time, but have never lost the thrill of our non dressed times together. I cherish the time I have as Dianne, but I also cherish those rare moments alone as husband and wife. There have been nights when we find ourselves alone with a guarantee of no unexpected arrivals. You may think this is a perfect time for Dianne to emerge. It is, but it's also a nice time to just sit and cuddle on the couch... Catch 22. Eleven o'clock comes and my wife might say "I thought you might get changed tonight." And truly I thought about it long and hard, but decided that our time together was more important. Balance, communication, and respect for your partner's feelings are the best guidelines any couple can have.

LL: You've had some exposure, though, and in the gender press. Cover girl on the *Canadian Cross Dresser* (out of publication) and now the first Canadian to be featured in *LadyLike*. You were also voted Ms. Ingénue at a Pocono weekend. What does that do to your head?

DR: Crossdressing has been a part of my life since I was very young. It was in my life before I knew what cross-dressing, sex, gender, and personality was. I have lived with it as a private part of my life and as a shared part of my life. I have had it evolve from the lustful, sexual rush to a comfortable, integrated part of me. But through the maturation of my feminine side and the desire to express it physically, I have never let it become the sole focus of my life. Since my wife and I share my crossdressing it has taken up a part of our lives, but we still do many other things independently and together.

I'm not putting down the thrills I've had from cross-dressing. The first time we met other crossdressers was traumatic but wonderful. The first night four of us went out to dinner (two couples), I realized it was the first time I have been outside anywhere and literally had no male clothing to change back into. It was all miles away where we had first changed. The first Pocono weekend we attended. It has all been exciting and through it I have made many new and wonderful friends. I've been able to expand a part of me that has enriched my life. But I love to cook 7 course meals for 8, I love live theatre (watching and participating) I love computers, BBS-ing, and laughing with my kids.

Oh, there are times when the it-feels-so-good-I want-to-do-it-all-the-time syndrome waves over me and the need for Dianne is irresistible, but there are times when other things and commitments come first. I guess its like the rules and regulations... its all a matter of balance.

We have lived, laughed, cried, loved and experienced much since April 26, 1973. Those years have been witness to the birth and development of a very special part of me though the help of a very special person in my life. Together we have overcome the misconceptions and the stereotypes of cross dressers. Together we have developed and improved Dianne's look. Together we have established a set of parameters that not only fits our lifestyle but also strikes a workable balance for all the those involved in our lives. Life is a give and take affair but if you do it right it can also be a win/win situation.

LL: Any remarks for our still-closeted readers?

DR: I would say: Take time to enjoy your crossdressing but remember it's not everything. Don't put yourself down because you have and enjoy a feminine side of yourself. Use it. Explore it. Mold it. Cherish it. The day you stop wholesale purging of your wardrobe and actually discard things because they have worn out or don't fit is the day you know you have come to terms with yourself.

My life has been irrevocably changed by the crossdressing experiences I have had, the people I have met, and the feelings I have been able to openly share.



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Worldwide directory of organizations.

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Girl Talk



Girl Talk is your forum. Any question on any topic is fair game, from makeup secrets to the psychology of transgendered behavior. If I don't have an answer, I'll find someone who does. Write me care of this magazine with your questions. I just love to get mail.

Dear JoAnn,

You and most of the other girls who appear in LadyLike look too good to be true. I'll bet that photo of you atop your column is really old. I notice in some other magazines that have been around a long time that the girls in the pictures never seem to age. How old are you anyway?

Doubting Dale, Calif.

Dear Doubting,

Never, never, **never** ask a lady how old she is. (I'm 46. Nyah, nyah!) Allow me to dispel some rumors about JoAnn Roberts. I am **not** a genetic female. I am **not** a transsexual, although I am sometimes mistaken for one and am flattered when it happens. I do **not** live full-time as a woman.

I am married (over 20 years) to a wonderful lady. We have two children. My family and friends are very supportive of my crossdressing activities. I am extremely lucky. I consider myself an **atypical** crossdresser because I have so much freedom to express this part of my personality. I wish everyone had the freedom I have.

Finally, the photo opposite is as recent as May 1994. I just work hard at looking the best I can.

Dear JoAnn,

A few years ago I bought fake nails that were wide enough to cover my nails, stayed on well and took polish very nicely. I've since lost all trace of where they came from. Can you help.

T.C., WI

Dear T.C.,

I am not clairvoyant, hon. However, I can point you in the direction of NS Products, one of our regular advertisers. They have carried wide press-on nails for as long as I've known them. Give 'em a buzz and they'll fix you up.

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Dear JoAnn,

I am a novice and I've got lotsa questions. Like, how do I figure out my shoe size? Are there any particular mail-order companies you use and would recommend? I paid over \$90 for a "Treasure Chest" plus shipping and handling charges. It was garbage, so I threw it away. I can't afford to waste anymore hard-earned money. What should I do?

P.M., WV

Dear P. M.

You learned an expensive but useful lesson. Always investigate your sources first, or at least get a recommendation from someone. Had you done that with the "Treasure Chest" vendor, you would have found all sorts of complaints.

But that's spilt milk and no use dwelling on it. I buy a lot of my clothes from places like *Spiegel* and *Victoria's Secret*, but I don't think they're what you had in mind for recommendations. Any of the vendors who advertise in *LadyLike* are a good place to start. You've already contacted two. The closest vendor/store to you is *Fashion Fantasy* in Manassas, VA. Call them at 703-330-1900.

As for shoe size, add 1 to 1½ sizes to your male shoe size. Hon, that means you wear gunboats at size 13, but don't despair. Anne at *Shoe Express* can fit you. They sell sizes 9 to 14 only. Call her at 318-235-5191 or drop 'em a line at PO Box 31537, Lafayette, LA 70593.

Dear JoAnn,

I see all these ads for pills and creams to enlarge breast size. Do any of these products really work?

Courtney, MN

Dear Courtney,

No, they don't. The creams to which you refer usually contain harmless ointments, sometimes mixed with what are called plant estrogens, compounds that mimic female hormones but which come from plants. Applied topically, they may make the skin feel more supple, but they will not cause breast enlargement. Stop using the cream and your skin returns to its former condition.

The pills usually are not much more than vitamins. Sometimes they contain ground-up organs from female animals. If these pills could cause real breast enlargement, they'd be classified as drugs and you would need a prescription to buy them.

Save your money. Even if you wanted to get real hormones to develop breasts, the health risks are

much greater than if you went and had implants. My advice is to invest in a good pair of breast forms from Camp, Airway, Mirage or Melody. They're a lot safer and cheaper. Let your fantasies do the rest.

Dear JoAnn,

Can I just have selective electrolysis? Like, can I just remove twenty percent of my beard all over my face? Also, what about these creams that claim to stop hair growth?

Lynn, VA

Dear Lynn,

Sure, you can have selective electrolysis. Many people I know have just the heaviest and darkest hairs removed from their beards. As we get older, more hair turns grey or white and those don't show through makeup, so only the darkest need treatment. Talk to your operator and work out a schedule that's best for you.

There is no topical treatment that will permanently stop hair growth. Heck, even electrolysis doesn't always work. The cream you mention will retard hair growth with repeated and continuous use. But, stop the stop the treatment and the hairs will grow back.

I've said this many times, and I'll probably have to say it again — electrolysis is presently the only permanent method of hair removal.

Dear JoAnn,

I see ads for breastforms in the price range of \$80 a pair to over \$700 a pair. Can you help me sort out the confusion? I want something as real and as natural as possible, but I don't want to waste my money trying to find out what's best.

Marsha, OH

Dear Marsha,

As they say, "You pays yer money and you takes yer choice." How much you end up spending on breastforms will depend on the effect you're after. If you just want to fill out a bra, you can make your own forms per the instructions in my book *Art & Illusion: A Guide to Crossdressing*, Third Edition, Vol. 2. They'll cost you less than a dollar a pair.

At the next level are forms made by several individuals on a local basis. I've seen these forms at events for \$50 to \$80 a pair. They feel really good, but they don't even remotely look real. Most are

continued next page

Girl Talk, cont'd.

made by taking a commercially available elastomer and remolding it into a breastform. The stuff feels like gummy bears, nice and soft.

Next step up are prosthetic breastforms for mastectomy patients. These will run upwards of \$250 a pair or more. They feel great and they look OK in a bra, but they won't fool anyone. There are several vendors in the community selling these forms, some of whom advertise in *LadyLike*. Check the CDS *Who's Who & Resource Guide* for a comprehensive list of breastform vendors.

Then there are the "Cadillac" forms, Mirage and Melody. Mirage forms were recently redesigned and look even better than they did before. They're very realistic, especially under a translucent or lace top. They can be glued to the body and you don't need a bra. I don't think they feel real, but that's the trade-off for looks and durability. Mirage forms start at around \$500 - \$600 dollars and come in four standard sizes. Larger sizes cost more. Mirage is sold by NS Products. See their ad in this issue. Melody forms, on the other hand, look great, feel great, but you can't glue them on. They come in a variety of sizes, all of which cost the same, about \$750. Melody can be contacted at PO Box 2142, Yorba Linda, CA 92686, 714·693·9163..

Dear JoAnn,

I have a question about gaffs. I've tried three different gaffs from various mail-order firms. They were all black nylon with straps or ropes and, in fact, didn't work. I've read about latex or powernet nylon gaffs in pink or flesh color. Where can I find a source of this type.

Jan, MN

Dear Jan,

The type of gaff you're looking for is available from Fashion Fantasy, 9013A Centreville Rd., Manassas, VA 22110, 703·330·1900. My friend Angela Gardner did a "test drive" of this gaff and she reported her impressions in *Cross-Talk* (issue #52). These are well-made gaffs of powernet nylon and Lycra spandex (not latex). The waist is a nice wide band about 1½ inches across and the "tail piece" is a thin panel, not a strap or a rope. In fact, depending on your body, these gaffs can be worn front to back. You pick which way. The Fashion Fantasy gaffs are \$30, plus shipping and handling and come in a variety of colors, including flesh tone.

Dear JoAnn.

Is there any way to shape eyebrows without plucking and trimming? I'm just interested for photos, not public socializing.

JoAnne, FL

Dear JoAnne,

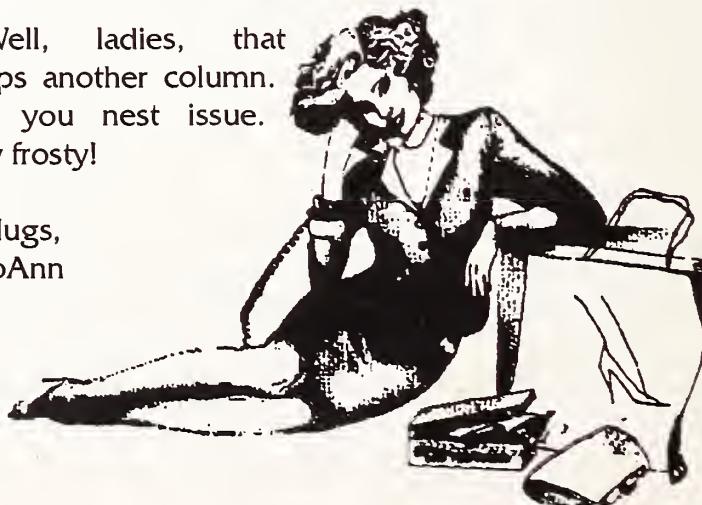
There are a couple of ways you can achieve a new look for your brows without changing them permanently. Both of these tricks are covered in detail in *Art & Illusion: A Guide to Crossdressing*, Third Edition, Vol. 1.

The first trick is to change the arch. Most male brows are pretty much straight across. You can create an arch anywhere on the brow line with a thin (¼ inch) piece of plastic medical tape from the local pharmacy. Peel off a length that will fit from just above your brow into your hairline and tear it lengthwise into a thin strip. Clean the skin on your forehead and above the brow with alcohol and pat with a dry cloth. Position one end of the tape above your brow where you want the arch and press it down. Pull up on the tape and "lift" the brow into an arch. Press the tape down against your forehead and into your hairline, or over your wig cap if you wear one. Repeat on the other side. Experiment with different positions to see how it changes the overall expression of your face.

You may want to combine this second trick with the first, or simply use it by itself. What you do here is block out the brow hair, completely or partially, with stick glue. I use "Uhu" brand in a yellow tube, but any white glue in stick form will work. You apply the glue from under the brow and pat in tinted powder. Keep applying glue and powder until your brow is shaped the way you want it, or completely blocked out. You can redraw a new brow line above the old one with a pencil. The glue washes right out in the shower.

Well, ladies, that wraps another column.
See you next issue.
Stay frosty!

Hugs,
JoAnn



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Books – Art & Illusion: A Guide to Crossdressing, Vols. 1 & 2; \$15 each • Speaking As A Woman; \$10 • The Cross & The Crossdresser; \$10 • Coping With Crossdressing; \$12 • Who's Who & Resource Guide; \$10 • **Videos** – Couple's Video (90 min); \$45 • Straight Dope on Hormones; \$40 • Cosmetic Surgery Options; \$40 • Add 10% postage • VISA & MasterCard accepted

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The Death of Gender

by Virginia Prince

Since 1965, I have argued the distinction between sex and gender and written extensively about it. I lived through the Great Depression, four wars, the sexual revolution, Women's Liberation, and Gay Liberation. During all those years I watched society change in various ways. Gender always seemed to be there through it all. Naturally, there were always males and females (and always will be), but there were also boys and men, and girls and women. Now, as I look at the world in the last decade of the 20th century, I begin to see what looks to me like the incipient death of Gender.

It won't happen tomorrow, but I am reasonably certain it will die away in the same way most of what we decided were male-appropriate and female-appropriate behaviors have disappeared.

This blurring of distinctions has largely been brought about by Women's Liberation since World War II. Back in the days before that war, men and women had specific jobs, wore specific clothes, and spoke in their own characteristic ways. Then came the war which moved women into factories to take the place of the men in the services. Women liked working and performing other tasks outside the home, even though the work was hard and often dirty, because it gave them a feeling of freedom they had not previously enjoyed.

When the war was over, society tried to send the women back to the kitchen, the church and the kids. Many women didn't want to return to that lifestyle, many couldn't afford to go back to it, and younger women, with no home to return to, decided that maybe being tied to a home wasn't such a great idea after all. These sentiments were voiced in Simone De Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex*, which examined the position of women in society. This book became the bible of the Feminist movement. Women went on to assert themselves, educate themselves, and move into the male's world of law, medicine, politics, engineering, and even the military. Competing with men and working in areas where men made the rules, forced women to adopt not only more masculine clothes, but

also some of men's less desirable behaviors. They drank, smoked, swore and joined in mob demonstrations like men. Female violence, crime and drug addiction also increased.

As for clothing, women have come to prefer slacks or trousers, not only for work, but for daily life. Some women don't own more than one or two dresses. Tops may be shirts, sweat shirts or t-shirts. Shoes are heavy, thick-soled, ankle-high athletic shoes like men's, with boots a popular second. Women wear their hair shorter, like men, and little makeup or jewelry. Panties — a stereotypical feminine item — are passed up in favor of "Jockey For Her" — ironic considering the source of the word "jock."

In short, many women have abandoned what was thought of as feminine in favor of the trappings of masculinity. Girls and young women dress so much like boys and young men that if you can't get a view across the chest where breasts may be evident, you really can't tell which is which.

For years Women's Liberation has said they resent the way men treat women as sex objects. Yet, when women dress, act, talk, drink, swear, and, in many other ways, imitate men, what is left to distinguish them except for sex? Masculinity and femininity used to be two separate ways of expressing oneself, but much of the differences are now gone. Male-ness and female-ness provide erotic pleasure and perpetuate the species, but masculinity and femininity are dissolving into non-specific uniformity.

In contrast, men are being backed into a corner. They dare not manifest overt feminine qualities. They still feel a need to separate and distance themselves from women, so they are in a bind. The result is a polarization within the masculine world. Some men flee into hyper-masculinity, popularly termed "machismo," and some men fight a sort of "rear-guard" action by taking on some of the femininity left behind by the advancing women.

For a while, some men took to wearing one earring. Two would have been too feminine. But now you see guys with multiple studs in both ears, a further move-

LadyLike #21

ment into a formerly feminine domain. Men's clothing is more colorful and the fabrics softer. You find satin in jackets and uniforms (no lace yet, but I'm sure that will come too).

We hear about "paternal leave" following the birth of babies allowing fathers to stay home and help care for the new mother and child. Men are sharing housekeeping chores, especially where both partners work outside the home.

Of course, most obvious to us is the increasing public tolerance of crossdressing men. That doesn't mean public approval, but it does mean that if a crossdresser gets "read," people no longer make a big fuss. The public just doesn't care much anymore. The general attitude is: "Do what you want. Just don't bother me." As society changes, we can move more freely, go places and do things as crossdressers. The many appearances of crossdressers on television (since my first appearance in 1968, if I may be permitted the plug) and the open reception crossdresser conventions receive in public hotels these days, testify to a greater tolerance by society. Another indicator is the

increasing number of characters portrayed as cross-dressers in television and on stage.

I have often said, crossdressers are the vanguard of Men's Liberation. We have come a long way in liberating ourselves personally, and, by example, help liberate the rest of "men-kind," although not by urging them to wear dresses. As women become more like men, of necessity, men become more like women, because both are becoming more Human, complete, fulfilled and unstressed by artificial standards.

As this blurring continues, I see the number of crossdressers diminishing because there will be little left to admire, envy or imitate of the opposite sex. Gender distinction, as we know it and enjoy it, is on the way out.

Of course, this is an on-going process, not an event, so there will still be years left to enjoy femininity. But the era of pretty, feminine women is slowly passing away. That may be good for society in general, but I fear those of us who are crossdressers, transgenderists and transsexuals are living in a slowly dying world. Enjoy it while you can. ☺

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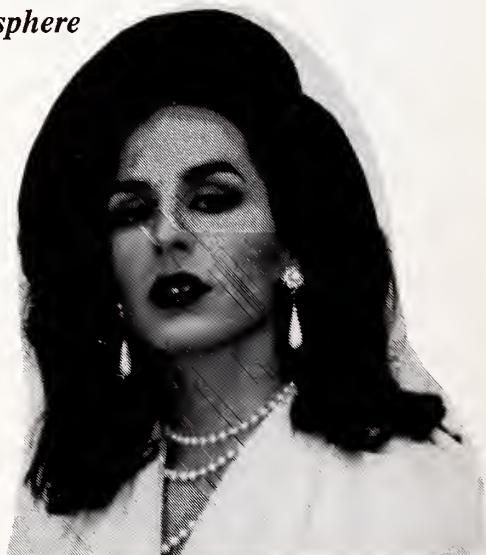
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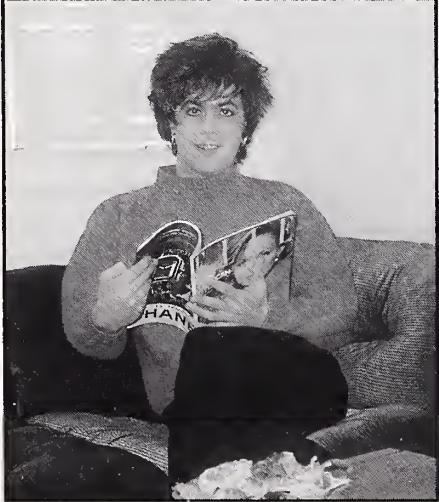


Rachel Jean Tracy, Fla. ▼

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Rachel Jean Tracy, Fla. ▶



Jenni, Minn. ▶

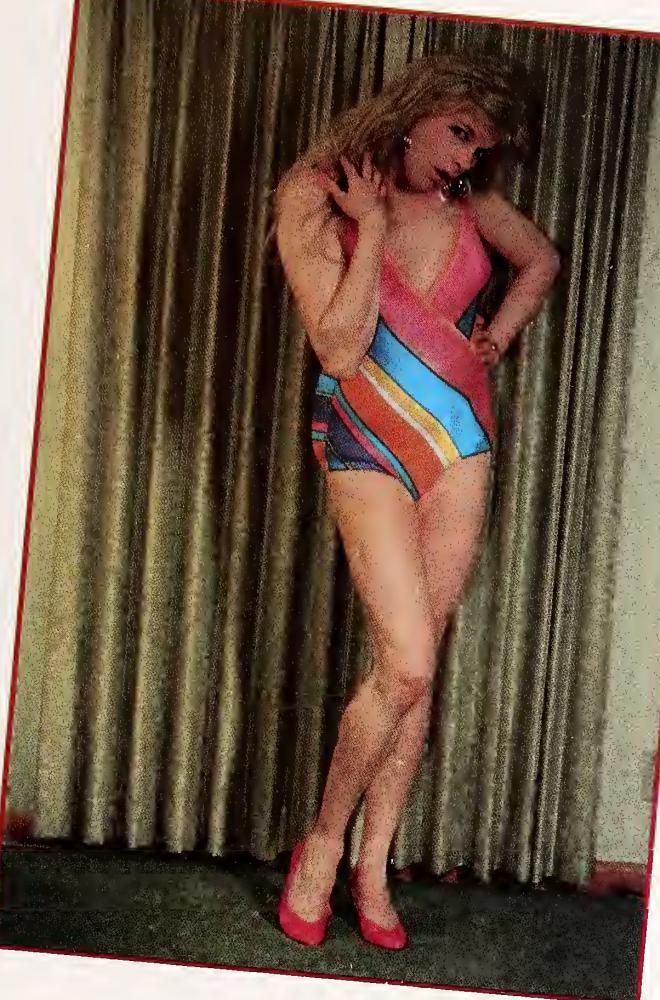


Claudia, Germany ▶



JoAnn Roberts, Pa. ▶





Jenni, Minn. ▲

MIRROR



Rachel Lane, Ind. ▲



Karen Fox, Canada ▼



Emily, Del. ▼

Resources

Our listings are the most up-to-date. Please keep us informed of any changes or additions. Thanks!

• National Organizations •

American Educational Gender Information Service (AEGIS), Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033-0724. Publishes *Chrysalis Quarterly*, and several pamphlets on gender issues. Extensive referral network for transsexual issues. 404-939-0244. Call in evening. (Affiliated with Renaissance Educ. Assoc., Inc.)

International Foundation for Gender Education (IFGE), Box 367, Wayland, MA 01778. Publishes *TVTS Tapestry*. Reprints and books on TV/TS subjects, other info. 617-899-2212.

Renaissance Education Assoc., Inc., Box 60552, King of Prussia, PA 19406, 610-630-1437, \$16 annual fee includes monthly newsletter. Background Papers on TV/TS issues for personal and professional use. Speakers Bureau. Several chapters. Affiliates noted as "RA."

Society for the Second Self (SSS), Box 194, Tulare, CA 93275. Focused on families and relationships. Publishes *Femme Mirror*. Chapters marked with "‡"

• Organizations and Businesses •

• by State •

City, Name, Address, Zipcode

Alabama

Huntsville, Sigma Rho Gamma‡, Box 16174, 35802

Arizona

Tempe, Alpha-Zeta‡, Box 24459, 85285

Arkansas

Jonesboro, Mu Sigma‡, Box 61, 72403

California

Concord, DVG, Box 272885, 94527

Duarte, CHIC, Box 562, 91010

Glendale, NS Products (Breast Forms and more), Box 6678-L, 91225

Lakewood, Classic Curves (Hip Enhancer) 2620 Carson St. #55, 90712

L.A., Androgyny, POBox 480740, 90048

L.A., Alpha‡, Box 36091, 90036

Sacramento, SGA, Box 215456, 95821

San Diego, Neutral Corner, Box 12581, 92112

San Francisco, ETVC, Box 426486, 94142-64861

San Jose, RGA, Box 700730, 9517

Sherman Oaks, Lydia's Fashions (boutique), 13837 Ventura Blvd., #2, 91423

Tustin, Versatile Fashions (boutique), Box 1051, 92681

Woodland Hills, Cross-Talk, (magazine), PO Box 944, 91365

Yorba Linda, Melody Products Int'l (breast forms), Box 2142, 92686

Yorba Linda, Powder Puffs of Calif., Box 1088, 92686

Connecticut

Farmington, COS, Box 163, 06034

Hartford, The XX Club, Inc. (TS only, please), PO Box 387, 06141-0387

Colorado

Denver, Gender Identity Center Inc., 3715 West 32nd Ave, 80211

Northern & Southern Colo., please call 303-458-5378

Delaware

Wilmington, Renaissance DE Chapter, Box 5656, 19808

Florida

Hollywood, Serenity, Box 307, 33022

Miami, Animas, Box 420309, 33242

Winter Park, Phi Epsilon Mu‡, Box 3261, 32790

Georgia

Atlanta, AGE, Box 77562, 30357

Rosewell, Sigma Epsilon‡, Box 272, 30077-0272

Illinois

Chicago, CGS, Box 578005, 60657

Washington, CIGA, Box 126, 61517

Wood Dale, Chi Chapter‡, Box 40, 60191

Indiana

Indianapolis, IXE, Box 20710, 46220

Iowa

Cedar Rapids, Iowa Artistry, Box 75, 52406-0075

Kansas

Kechi, Wichita Transgender Alliance, Box 315, 67067

Overland Park, KCCAF, Box 4092, 66204

Shawnee Mission, Gender Dysphoria Support, Box 15561, 66215

Louisiana

New Orleans, GGA (RA), Box 870213, 70187

Maine

Portland, TransSupport, Box 17622, 04101

Massachusetts

Waltham, Vernon's Specialties (boutique), 386 Moody St., 02254

Woburn, TCNE Inc., Box 2283, 01888

Michigan

Grand Rapids, IME W. Michigan, Box 1153, 49501

Royal Oak, Crossroads, Box 1245, 48068

Minnesota

Minneapolis, CLCC, Box 16265, 55416

St. Paul, MFGE, Box 17945, 55117

Mississippi

Jackson, Beta Chi‡, Box 31253, 39206

Missouri

St. Louis, St. Louis Gender Found'n, Box 9433, 63117

Nebraska

Council Bluffs, RCGA, Box 680, 51502

New Mexico

Albuquerque, Fiesta!‡, 8200 Montgomery NE #241, 87109

New Jersey

Mays Landing, Renaissance SJ, Box 189, 08330

Red Bank, MOTG(RA), Box 8243, 07701

Trenton, Sigma Nu Rho‡, Box 9255, 08650

New York

Albany, TGIC, Box 13604, 12212

Hempstead, LIFE, Box 31, 11551

Mountaintown, Chi Delta Mu‡, Box 93, 10953

New York, MGN(RA), Box 45, 561 Hudson St., 10014

New York, Mardi Gras Boutique, 400 W. 14th St. at 8th Ave., 212-947-7773

Rochester, CD•Network, Box 92055, 14692

Syracuse, EON Inc., 523 W. Onondaga St., 13204

Resources

Tillson, Transgender Network, Box 177,
12486-0177

North Carolina

Charlotte, CTA, Box 25100, Ste 188,
28229-5100

Charlotte, KappaBeta‡, PO Box 12101,
28220-2101

Ohio

Cincinnati, Cross-Port, Box 12701,
45212

Elyria, Alpha-Omega‡, Box 954, 44036

Parma, Paradise Club, Box 29564, 44129

Reynoldsburg, Crystal Club, Box 287,
43068

Oklahoma

Oklahoma City, Sigma Beta, Box 60354,
73146

Oregon

Portland, NWGA, Box 4928, 97208.

Pennsylvania

Easton, CDI, PO Box 61, 18044

Elkins Park, Best Value Products (mail
order catalog "B"), Box 8848, 19117

Erie, Erie Sisters, 2115 W 8th St, #261,
16505

York, Renaissance LSV, Box 2122,
17105

Jenkintown, Laine Alexander Image
Consultant, 215-635-8858

Phila. (Metro), Renaissance GP, Box
530, Bensalem, 19020

Phila., Occasional Woman (custom
clothes), 215-352-0248

Pittsburgh, TransPitt, Box 3214, 15230

Upper Darby, Marilyn's Wigs,
215-446-0799

Tennessee

Nashville, Tenn. Vals, Box 92335, 37209

Texas

Alief, Tau Chi, Box 1105, 77411

Arlington, Delta Omega‡, Box 1021,
76004

Amarillo, AlphaChi‡, Box 50266, 79159

Houston, GCTC, Box 90335, 77090

Houston, Int'l Conf. on Transgender
Law, 5707 Firenza St., 77035

Riesel, TriPlex Gender Assoc., Box 381,
76682

San Angelo, Heart of Texas NW, Box
30413, 76903

Utah

Salt Lake City, Alpha Rho Provesta‡,
Box 26711, 84126

Virginia

Arlington, TGEA, Box 16036, 22215

Richmond, Virginia's Secret, Box 7386,
23221-0386

West Virginia

Huntington, Trans-WV, Box 2322, WV
25724

Washington

Seattle, Emerald City, Box 31318, 98103

Stanwood, Omega Alpha‡, Box 876,
98292

•Canadian•

Cornbury Society, Box 3745,
Vancouver, B.C. V6B-3Z1

Gender Mosaic, Box 7421, Ottawa, On-
tario, K1L-8E4

Monarch Social Club, Mississauga A
Box 386, Mississauga, Ont. L5A 3A1,
416-949-6602

Wildside Boutique, 161 Gerrard St. E.,
Toronto, Ont., M5A-2E4, 416-864-0420

FantasyLand, 274 8th St. E., Box 682,
Owen Sound, Ontario, N4K-5R4

•Recurring Events•

California Dreamin', put on by PPOC,
CHIC, et. al., in May in Burbank, Ca.

Be All You Can Be Weekend, put on by
Paradise Club, Crossroads, Trans-Pitt
and Chi Chapter in June. Rotates thru
Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Pitts-
burgh.

Esprit, put on by Emerald City, NWGA
& Cornbury Society in May in Port
Angeles, Wash.

Fantasia Fair, sponsored by the Out-
reach Institute in Provincetown, Mass.,
in October.

IFGE Convention, once a year in March/
April, '95 in Atlanta, GA. Contact
I.F.G.E.

Monarch Mardi Gras, Monarch Social
Club, 1st wknd in October in Ontario.

Paradise in the Poconos, 4days/3 nights,
May & Sept. in the Pa. Poconos. Con-
tact CDS/JoAnn Roberts.

Southern Comfort, Sept. weekend in
Atlanta. Contact CTA, North Carolina.

Tiffany Provincetown Outings, twice
a year in Oct & June. Contact TCNE.

**For the most complete listing of Resources in
the transgender community, you need to get the
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Keli Gray



LadyLike's **Profile**

NAME: Keli Gray

AGE: 30

PROFESSION: Aviation

RESIDENCE: Maryland

HEIGHT: 5' 8"

WEIGHT: 155#

MEASUREMENTS: 38-29-36

SHOE SIZE: 11/12

FAVORITE THINGS

SHOE STYLE: High heels

STYLES: Sophisticated, sultry, anything that shows my legs

PERFUME: Anything Oriental or Musky

MOVIE: Science Fiction

MUSIC: Country

PLACE: At the controls of anything fast

TURN-ONS: Sexy clothes, black seamed stockings, my wife Lisa!

TURN-OFFS: Pushy people, ignorance, runs in my stockings, a bad wig

LadyLike: According to your background information, you didn't start dressing until you were about 16 or 17. Is that correct?

Keli Gray: Actually, the first time I crossdressed was about seventeen years ago when I was 13. I participated in a local church fund raiser with six or seven other men. At the time, I had no desire to explore crossdressing further, although I felt something. I just didn't know what.

I was approached to perform in the fund raiser and I accepted because I enjoy being on stage in any capacity. I arrived to prepare for the show, but I wasn't ready for the outcome, and neither were my parents. When I walked onstage, my father didn't recognize me. I was dressed as an ice skater in a white sweater and a pleated, navy skater skirt. I really felt the part I was playing, and nobody in the audience could tell I wasn't female. I enjoyed the reaction I received from everyone and it felt natural to



Keli Gray

me playing the part of a female. I did not participate in any more functions until I was 16 or 17.

It was during those shows that I experienced how fulfilling it was to look and feel so feminine. I attributed the feelings I had during the first show on puberty, so when I did the second show and felt an increasing desire to look feminine, I realized it wasn't puberty. I did some more shows over the next couple of years and enjoyed them, but I still felt as though something was lacking within me. I didn't participate in any more shows, or dress "en femme" until last year. I was not a happy person during that time because I suppressed my curiosity and feminine side from everyone, including myself. I didn't think I was "normal" for having those feelings; I buried them.

LL: There was nothing between then and now? Come on, you must have had some experiences.

KG: No, there were no periods of crossdressing at



all. I was still curious and confused about how I felt. I researched crossdressing, in the library looking for any answers to my feelings, but I found none that could explain the interest I felt.

While in college, I discovered adult book shops and some crossdressing material. It was not very helpful, but it was all I could find at the time. One day, watching television, I came across a program which dealt with crossdressers and that helped me realize I was not alone in my feelings of femininity or in wanting to express them.

I researched some more and realized that the information I was obtaining from the adult book stores was of no real help to me, so I continued to bury my feelings. I met my wife, Lisa, during this period of repression.

LL: I noticed in your list of "Turn-Ons" you mentioned Lisa. That's really sweet. You and Dianne Richard (see other Profile this issue) are the first crossdressers ever to mention their partner there. Did Lisa know about your crossdressing before you two got serious?

KG: She was aware of my crossdressing for the fund raisers, but that was it. Those were the only

times I had dressed "en-femme." It was difficult to explain my feelings to her because I did not understand them all myself. I was sure I liked crossdressing as a woman, but I didn't know why. I felt if she knew even *that* much, she would think I was weird, or crazy, and leave.

LL: So, how did she find out?

KG: Remember that information I had obtained from the adult book stores that was no help (meaning pornographic and/or sexually explicit)? Well, she found my stash while cleaning and confronted me with it. I just said that it fascinated me to see men pass themselves off as women. Then, I took it all outside and burned everything. I promised, "I won't buy anymore again, I swear."

About six months later, I broke that promise and bought a couple more magazines and I bought your book, *Coping With Crossdressing*, too. Needless to say, she found these too. I thought it was all over this time but instead of having to answer the "Are you weird, Are you gay, What's wrong with you" questions, she just cried.

After we cried together, we started talking, and I



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told her how I felt, and why I bought the book. I told her it was difficult to find decent information about crossdressing and that was why I bought these things. She read your book and it helped answer her questions and calmed her fears (and my fear of her leaving).

Next time I was asked to be in a fund raiser Lisa said, "This time, I will do your makeup and you will win."

LL: You had an interesting experience doing that particular contest, didn't you?

KG: Lisa (who is a licensed cosmetologist) did my make-up and picked my wardrobe. She had also volunteered to do the other participants' makeup as well. She spent two hours preparing me for the show at home. It was also the first time I have ever stepped foot outdoors as a female.

I arrived backstage fully dressed for the show in a leopard-print mini dress (which I had to try on in the department store), make up bag in tow. I stood at the doorway waiting for Lisa and one of the other participants approached me and asked "What's your name, and are you here to do my make up?"



I just looked down at him and said in my deepest voice, "Wrong cowboy." His face turned red and he said "Oh, my God, it's the redhead guy from practice last night," and walked away. No one had any idea of who I was until I opened my mouth.

The contest consisted of a parade of contestants and introduction, lip sync talent, and question and answer. With a limited experience in heels, and many nights of choreographing a dance to "Take It Back" by Reba McEntire, I strutted away with First Place. Lisa was more excited about me winning than I was (well... almost).

Winning that night was a dream come true for me because I finally emerged from the shell I had crawled in since my last performance. But this time was different; I could share my feelings with someone, Lisa, who finally understood me.

LL: That was really a rebirth then for you. What happened next?

KG: About two weeks later I turned on the television at work and Maury Povich had a show about crossdressers and their relationships. I called Lisa at home and told her to watch it. We watched separately in silence and amazement. Finally couples like us!



Lisa called the show afterwards to obtain a video tape but none were available. The other number listed during the show was for I.F.G.E., so we called it and they gave us a phone number for a most helpful and supportive couple. They answered all the questions and have turned out to be dear friends.

The one thing they couldn't help us with was a name for "her." That's when Lisa arrived with the name Keli (a combination of our real first names). It's appropriate because Keli is the end result of the effort that we both have put in to developing her.

Since completing Keli's identity, Lisa and I (as my male-self) enjoy shopping for Keli. We once drove four hours, spontaneously, to shopping mall (there are no local shops which cater to Keli's taste) to find something unique. Our purchase that day consisted of Keli's first pair of 5-inch heels.

The best part was when the sales girl came out from back and handed Lisa the shoes. I said, "they're for me," and proceeded to try them on, as my male-self. While paying for them the salesgirl was whispering to her co-worker beside her, "They're for the guy." Lisa said, "Yeah, and he looks better in his dress than you do in yours."

LL: So, you guys are very comfortable be open

about your crossdressing. That's really great.

Now, if everything goes right, you have a very special event planned for February. What is it?

KG: I am very excited because Lisa has agreed to marry me (and Keli). As an added surprise, she suggested we attend the Texas "T" Party as part of our honeymoon. Not only is it special because of that but, it is Keli's first COMING OUT!!!

We haven't been in public as Lisa and Keli (except for the pageant). Keli did not exist at that time.

LL: What plans, if any, do you have for Keli's future activities?

KG: I would like to become more involved in the transgender community. Sharing with other people with the same interest helps me become more confident and grow as a person, and as Keli too. I would like to see a support group evolve locally because there are none less than three hours away.

I think Keli will become more visible at home as well. She has only come out about twelve times, so far. That may seem minimal to others, but to Keli its a dream to have come out even once.





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With the addition of bust projection, they all realized that the beauty salon customers assumed Alex up some little flesh-toned garment in her hand. was a girl... that opened up his wardrobe options. Alex found himself wearing a pair of stretch, black stirrup pants with black suede slip-on shoes. On top, he had a bulky, electric blue pullover sweater which came down to his thighs. His hair was pulled back loosely below his neck with a matching blue "scrunchie." In short, he was wearing girl's clothes!

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THE MAKEOVER

The head instructor gets our attention. She holds My husband, Robert, has a lovely, wavy mane. His "Indeed!" his aunt gleefully acknowledged. "But

ized that the beauty salon customers assumed Alex up some little flesh-toned garment in her hand. hair is simple, yet he's learning to do a million things even more amazing... you could have your very own

was a girl... that opened up his wardrobe options. "This is a gaff," she announces, wiggling the rubbery with it. He can wear it up, down, even half up and breasts!"

Alex found himself wearing a pair of stretch, black stirrup pants with black suede slip-on shoes. On waking hours for the foreseeable future. And you down in an unrestrained curly bob. I also like him chest. "B... but boys don't get breasts, Auntie!" he

top, he had a bulky, electric blue pullover sweater will wear it at night, too. So the sooner you get used to wear bangs to emphasize his pretty eyes. Since it whined, trying to inform the obvious.

which came down to his thighs. His hair was pulled to it, the better. The instructors will pass one out to has grown out to beyond shoulder length, I make him take care of it himself. He's realized that being assured. "A nice bosom would be divine on you!"

back loosely below his neck with a matching blue "scrunchie." In short, he was wearing girl's clothes! how to put it on and wear it. IS A BRA NEXT? he requires a lot of grooming time.

IS A DRESS NEXT? Shocked, Rene frantically clutched his flat, narrow

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ARE EARRINGS NEXT? Rene blushed at the thought, then asked shyly,

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"THE BOY WHO BLOSSOMED"



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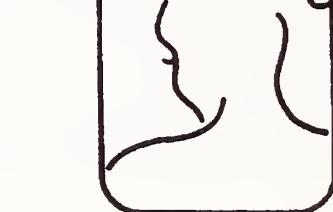
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Chapter 3

School is okay because I spend most of the day in a gifted program, studying science and math and art and stuff. They tell me I'm a genius, and I suppose maybe I am, for I'm the only one I know who has singlehandedly changed herself from a boy into a girl. Laura Ann Sykes, Nobel winner in the new category, Self-Initiated Sex Change. Thank you, thank you.

In most of my classes, I am allowed to be a girl. I'm not supposed to wear skirts or dresses, but I started in my junior year, and no one seemed to mind. But Miss Leoretta MacKenzie, my English teacher, is a stone bitch, and makes me change to slacks when I come to her class, and calls me Mr. Sykes. She's got no eyebrows.

"Please read your poem aloud, Mr. Sykes," she says. A loud snicker comes from Johnny Ray's direction.

"Mr. Sykes!" she snaps. I blink my eyes. "I'm sorry, Miss MacKenzie," I say. "I didn't realize you meant me." It was halfway true. As I don't fancy myself much of a Leroy, the name just sort of washes over me without sticking. Miss MacKenzie is aware of this, and she knows that using the name Laura Ann will get my attention right away, but she has a moral compunction against calling me by my right-f u l

name. She was so hateful on the first day of school that I showed up the

next day with my eyebrows shaved off and drawn on with black pencil just like she does and my hair up in a bun like hers and she dragged me down to Mr. Mendez's office on account of it. Mr. Mendez is the principal. He looked at me and then at Miss MacKenzie and then at me again. "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," I said,

and got sent home for 3 days. MacKenzie has had it in for me ever since, and so I get picked on a lot in her class. Today, s h e

tells me to read the poem I picked for the class assignment.

"I have seen the best minds of my generation..." I begin, and she goes white underneath her warpaint.

"Stop!" she cries, and I know I am one step away from saying hello to Mr. Mendez. "I won't allow that filth read in class!" She snatches up the little red book and waves it in the air. "This poem," she tells the class, "was written by a homosexual man, a pedophile, a degenerate who was taken to court on obscenity charges."

"He won," I say dryly. "The name of the poem is 'Howl,' by Allen Ginsberg," I add, so that everyone can write it down and try to find a copy as soon as school is out. "I got it at Mills Bookstore."

"Mr. Sykes," she says, "Please accompany me to the principal's office."

"You wouldn't like the ending anyway," I tell the class, and go with her.

Mr. Mendez is not happy to see me, but he will not suspend me, for we have come to an agreement of sorts. "Miss Sykes," he says, after the MacKenzie has run down, "you will remain after school for one hour every day this week and next."

"His name is Leroy, Mr. Mendez," says Miss MacKenzie. "Calling him Laura or Miss Sykes is giving in to his delusion that he is a girl."

Mr. Mendez glances at three boys from shop class, sitting uneasily in folding chairs in the waiting area. They are there to present him with a lamp made from a bowling pin. Every year the shop class gives him a lamp made from a bowling pin. I wonder where he keeps them all. He gets up and pulls his office door closed so they won't hear. "Damn

continued on page 38

Personals



0423 — NJ: Crossdresser from Central New Jersey seeking same for correspondence and possible meeting. Love dressing and role playing. Discretion a must! Photo with reply. Tiffany.



0523—New York: If you want a good correspondent with wide knowledge of TV affairs, then drop me a line. Always room for a new friend. I answer all letters. Connie.



1025—Mich: Marcia Ann: For over 25 years have enjoyed traveling, dining, & shopping "en femme." Authored article on mature CD's for LadyLike. Love to correspond with prompt reply to all. Like to help others.



1125 — Penna: Heterosexual male seeks female who understands that I can be her man as well as her sister. I would also like to correspond with other TVs in Upper Bucks Co., Pa. who feel the same. Will answer all letters.



1222—Wis: Hi! I'm Cindy (see more pix of me in LL#8) seeking friendships and girl-talk correspondence with sisters and real women who love this feminine lifestyle. Serious about femininity and the "total" look. Let's share.



1323 — New Jersey: I am a very caring & loving live-alone TV who loves the feminine lifestyle. I love to entertain & welcome those who enjoy all feminine things. Respond with picture, I will also answer all. I promise. Central NJ & Eastern Pa. Arlene T.

Personals



1423 — Mass: Attractive, sexy TV submissive seeks correspondence with mature, caring women for poss. long term relationship. Would love to have a feminine woman force me into her world of silk and lace. Love to hear from you. Send photo & letter. Tanya

1624—Penn. — SWM. prof., 36, 6', 185 lbs. with dark hair and blue eyes. Seeking very feminine TV or TS for friendship and dating. Sal.

1824—Illinois — Hi! I'm Laura (LL#14 Profile Girl). I want to renew acquaintances and make new friends. Requirements for friendship are appreciation of femininity, discretion, and a mutual desire for the augmentation of ambitions and dreams.

0223 — New York: Pretty TV, feminine and passable in public. 38, 5'9", thin. Seek men, women, couples for friendship, dating, parties and safe bedroom fun exploring our fantasies. Long Island & NYC preferred. Janet.

1523 — Tenn: Middle Tenn. gentleman. early 50's would love to correspond and hopefully meet TVs for dinner, dancing, hand holding, or whatever. Discretion a must. All will get a reply. Your picture appreciated.

1724—Penn. — If beauty is in the eyes of the beholder—I have beheld it in the luster of Robyn! A soft and feminine lady from Tennessee. Please respond for I truly do admire and respect you very much.

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The Problem

it, MacKenzie, this child is not psychologically a boy. He has been dressing like a girl all through high school. For better or worse, in three months she'll be out of here. It serves no purpose to cause him distress by refusing to call her by the name she chooses— he chooses— she chooses."

Mr. Mendez is not naturally so liberal; he comes about his opinions the hard way. On the first day of the ninth grade, I had found myself in his office.

"Very clever disguise, Sykes," he said to Elizabeth Fenner, who was there to see him about working in the school office. Liz turned white and gave a sort of sob and ran out into the hallway.

"I'm Laura Ann Sykes," I told him.

He stared at me and then took me into his office and closed the door. "Your name," he told me, "is Leroy Sykes."

"Legally it may be," I said. "That's only because my pa has one judge all tied up and hamstrung and the other is mad at me."

"Be that as it may, and regardless of what they let you do in junior high, you will dress as a boy at all times. Trousers. Shirts. Socks. You will wear no makeup. No jewelry. I'm not going to make you cut your hair, but I do expect you not to tease it up so. You will use the boys' bathroom. You will take physical education with the rest of the boys." He looked at my folder. "Scratch that. I see you're down for swimming instead of gym. You will wear a boy's bathing suit. You will use the boy's locker room. Do you understand me?"

I snapped my bubble gum, bent over and ran my hand up and down my stocking calf like I had seen Andrea Ammonds, the school tease, do. The effect was not wasted on Mendez. He swallowed hard and tugged at his collar. I straightened up and looked at him coolly. "Mr. Mendez, let me make something clear. There is only one part of my body that makes me a boy. I look like a girl without makeup on. Without jewelry. In boy clothes. I sound like a girl. I smell like a girl. That's because I am a girl."

He continued to look uncomfortable. "Nevertheless, you will do as I have said."

I grinned at him. "The boys' bathroom?" I got up and opened the door and made a clucking sound at two boys who were walking down the hall. They stopped and stuck their heads into the office. "Mr. Mendez tells me I gotta use the boys' room. Either of you interested in comin' along to see whether I'm a pointer or a setter? After that, we'll run along to the gym and you can see me in the pool, topless."

They grabbed my arm and started to hustle me off down the hall, and the boys from shop class, who were there that

year, too, forgot all about their lamp made from a bowling pin and came along . That did it. Mr. Mendez ran after us and grabbed me and brought me back into his office. He and I had obtained an uneasy truce that day; I was allowed to be me, so long as I did not actually wear a skirt or a dress and was not deliberately outrageous with my makeup or hair or behavior. I was not to use either the boys' or girls' restrooms; instead, I was given a key to the faculty lounge so I could use the one-seater in there. All-in-all, I couldn't have asked for more. Sure, he had sent me home for three days for sassing Miss MacKenzie, but that was because of my smart mouth and my cheap shot at her. For the most part, I lived up to my end of the bargain, and he to his. Now, he was reading her the riot act.

"Leoretta, it avails us nothing to persecute this child. Please take her back and try, just try, to teach her a little English. Call her by whatever name she wants. It won't hurt anything. Be a teacher. Teach. And you," —he looked at me heavily—"If I hear of you doing anything else to antagonize Miss MacKenzie, I will require you to cut your hair before returning to school."

Well, I could have had it lots worse. Stayin' after school is no fun, but it beats having to explain to Pa why I got suspended. Pa is a liberal man with a belt or a razor strap.

• • •

Every day at lunchtime, Johnny Ray sits down across the table from me and eats his food and part of mine. He's done it since third grade. His Jetsons' lunch box long ago gave way to an Igloo Lunchmate which would hold even Jethro Bodine's lunch. Johnny is a big eater—he was even when we were playing doctor in the ravine behind the playground. At five-six and three hundred pounds, Johnny has turned into a real four-by-four. He was always chubby, but something happened in the past year or so to make him puff up like a marshmallow man. It's my fault that he's as big as he is, and if he should up and kick off like Uncle Bob, why, I would feel right guilty about it.

Johnny Ray is just a miserable person. He could sit anywhere in the lunchroom, but he delights in tormenting me, and keeping my friends away. I think he lives vicariously through me, for he always wants to know who I've seen and what I've done. And about two years ago, he turned nasty— his interest took on sexual overtones. He stared lurking about in the bushes. He tried to rape me, and nearly succeeding. That's when I decided I had to do something about him.

Johnny looks at me like he looks at other girls, but he calls me Leroy. He gets worse and worse. "Howdy, Leroy," he says now. "That big Injun got any idea about the surprise you keep in your pants?" His cheeks are rosy, like two apples. He keeps his hair cut short in a burr, but he is looking more and more like a girl. It worries him, and it's

LadyLike #21

why he's getting so fat—to cover up his breasts, which came out of nowhere last year and which keep getting bigger and which embarrass him to death in gym class.

Johnny eats fast, all business. Like he's done every day since we were in the third grade, he picks up my carton of milk and drinks it dry. He is always messing in my food, too. Today, he reaches into my salad and picks up a piece of carrot and licks the ranch dressing off it and puts in his mouth like a cigarette. I push the plate away from me with both hands, and he falls to, devouring what I have left unfinished.

I sigh. If Johnny has discovered where I work, he will have spread the news about my Problem. I dread the thought of going to work and facing the music. "That's between me and Bobbo Joe," I tell him.

"That boy got some kind infatuation with you," Johnny leers.

"Don't you dare be hanging out at that truck stop," I tell him. "I'm already driving far enough as it is without you getting me fired so I'll have to go further."

"Them truck drivers," he muses. "Do they kiss on you and stuff?"

"Johnny Ray, you mind your affairs and I'll mind mine."

"Do you play with your titties?"

I look at him. "Do you play with yours?"

That gets him. He turns red in the face and gets up and staggers off.

• • •

Johnny's mother has had him to the doctor, who can't figure out why he's developing the way he's developing. I know; the reason is in my purse.

When I was thirteen years old, Ma started having hot flashes. It was a miserable time around the house, with her bitching and moaning and telling us how lucky men (meaning me and Pa) were to not have the change of life. Doc Johnson put her in the hospital and took out her female organs and ordered up some little purple pills for her. Since they weren't pain pills and didn't do anything for her nerves, she soon forgot about them. But I knew they were female hormones. I went to the library at the state university and found a big reference book that told about all kinds of medicine and read up on estrogens and what they did, and right then and there I decided they were for me. I was carrying one of her pills in a baggie in my pocket so that I could match it up with the pictures in the book. I went right into the mens' room and sat there and swallowed that pill. My hand was shaking so badly that I almost dropped it.

About a month later, I took the empty bottle to the pharmacist, and he refilled it. After a while, I guess, he knew it wasn't Ma that was taking the pills, but he didn't say anything; he just kept refilling the prescription. It was hard to find money to keep myself in medicine, but after I ran out

one time and the physical wheels started spinning in the opposite direction, towards boyhood, I always managed to find the money. Mostly, I babysat or did housework, but I've not been above mowing yards or weeding gardens or doing other hot and sweaty work to pay for the magic that I found in that bottle. When I turned sixteen I went to work as a waitress, and that solved my money problems.

• • •

Now, thirteen year-old-boys don't look all that different from thirteen-year-old girls, at least if they haven't gone into puberty. I hadn't. I had a high voice and not even a single pubic hair. Within a month or so after I started taking Ma's pills, I went into adolescence, only it wasn't boy-type changes I went through, but girl-like changes. Because of the way I had dressed and acted and worn my hair, I had sometimes been thought to be a girl, but six months after I started taking those pills, there wasn't any doubt what I was. My hips swelled up and my nipples got tender and my waist drew in and I plumb turned into a young woman—except that I had the aforementioned Problem. I had been hoping that it would sort of dwindle away and leave me with the other thing, but it persisted in staying the same while everything else was changing.

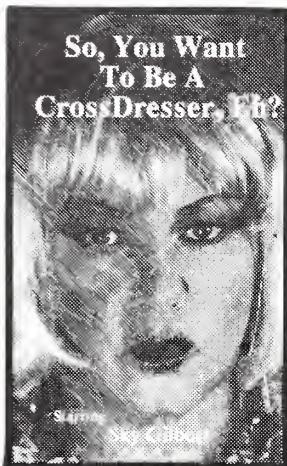
One night at the supper table I announced that I had changed my name to Laura Ann and that I was a girl. Pa leaned across the table and smacked me with the back of his hand and told me to go to my room. I lay on the bed and cried for a while. When I finally wound down, I sat up, and there on my dresser was one of Pa's paperback westerns. The cover showed a bunch of Indians in warpaint, dancing around a fire. I stared at it for a long, long time, and then piled all my boys' clothes, including the ones I was wearing, on the bed and gathered up the sheet around them and threw them out the window. I jumped out after them, stark naked, and dragged them into the back yard and siphoned some gasoline from Pa's Buick and used the cigarette lighter to set a piece of paper aflame. I walked over and stooped and set the clothes afire. By the time Pa noticed the flames and came running out of the house, the flames were ten feet high. Everything was burned to cinders.

I got a good larruping, but the next morning, when I showed up at breakfast in a pink blouse and girls' jeans (Clorinda's castoffs), little was said. I never wore boys' clothes again. Any that showed up I razored into confetti or burned. I would get whipped and warned not to do it again, but I did. After a while, Ma stopped buying them.

Pa thrashed me when I got after my eyebrows, and again when I had my ears pierced, and more than once for wearing dresses and skirts, and they threw away my hormone pills whenever they could find them. Once Ma

continued on page 41

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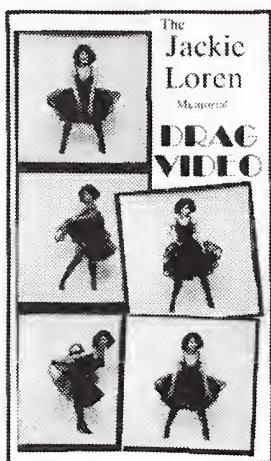
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The Problem

snuck into my room and cut off all my hair, which just made me look like a bald-headed girl. They had me to the family doctor, who was at a loss about what was going on and just said that I must be a "morphodite." The principal of the junior high, from which I had been suspended for refusing to cut my hair, told them to take me to Doc Symmons, the shrink I've been seeing ever since. That was all they could think to do, and at his recommendation, they've pretty much let me be a girl—not that they have much choice about it, 'cause I am what I am and I want what I want.

It was funny how people reacted to the change. Folks I met for the first time saw nothing unusual about me and treated me like any other girl. When I went back to school after summer vacation, wearing a skirt and makeup and with my hair permed, people didn't even recognize me, and treated me like a girl. They were shocked when they found out who I was. I looked so much like a girl that even the ones who were hateful tended to forget I wasn't one. After a while, everyone got so they pretty much took my appearance for granted, but most people refused to call me Laura Ann or refer to me with female pronouns. I believe things would have eventually worked out if it hadn't been for the everpresent Johnny Ray, keeping things stirred up.

• • •

In my purse I carry a little mortar and pestle that I borrowed from chemistry class. Every morning, just before lunch, I go into the stall in the girls' room and take two of the little purple pills and grind them up into powder and pour the powder into one of Mom's Goody papers. When I get to the lunchroom, I empty the paper into my milk and stir it with my straw so that everything dissolves. As I am finishing my meal, Johnny comes into the lunchroom and drinks the milk. Invariably. He never forgets. Five days a week, for more than a year now, he has been getting enough female hormones to feminize a tree stump.

Johnny Ray is going through the same kinds of changes that I did, and it's scaring him to death. He's eating like a pig to cover up his chest, trying to keep anyone from finding out about it. He doesn't have any idea why it's happening. He hates it, but if he hadn't started trying to rape me, I wouldn't have to put pills in my milk (which he has no right stealing, anyway), and he would grow up to be a man instead of whatever it is I am turning him into.

I should probably hate myself for what I have done to Johnny Ray, but I don't. He's getting exactly what he deserves. It's his just deserts for the miserable things he's done to me over the years.

to be continued...

American Educational Gender Information Service

AEGIS is a non-profit information and education resource for all transgendered people, their families and professionals who work with them. AEGIS publishes *Chrysalis Quarterly* and numerous information pamphlets.

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How LL Connections Work

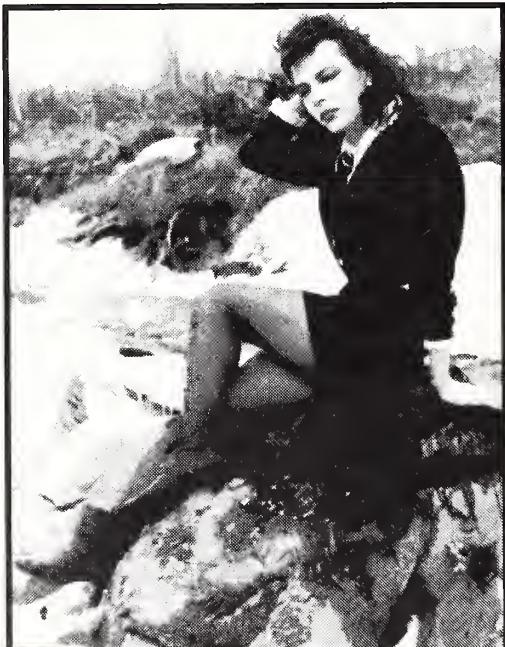
Listening To Messages...

1. Have writing materials ready in case you hear personal information, names, voicemail box numbers, etc. that you wish to note.
2. Call the 900 Connections Line number advertised on the opposite page, including the extension number (**Ext. 210**) and follow the easy-to-understand audio instructions.
3. There are several categories.

1-Straight Men	5-Swingers
2-Straight Women	6-TVs/TSs
3-Gay Men	7-Fetish Men
4-Gay Women	8-Fetish Women



Category 6 is designed especially for readers of *LadyLike*, but feel free to try the other lines as well.



Leaving Messages...

1. Write down your message and practice it first. You can include personal contact information or remain anonymous. The choice is yours.
2. Call the 900 number advertised on the opposite page including the extension (**Ext. 210**) and listen to the easy-to-follow audio instructions.
3. When asked to speak, speak clearly into the telephone handset. Keep the message brief and to the point.

Important! All personal messages are automatically screened before being loaded into the Connections Line. If your message is pornographic, profane, violent, bigoted or obviously insincere, it will be rejected. Below are examples of acceptable and unacceptable messages.

Acceptable Example

Hi, my name is Tricia. I'm a 30 year old crossdresser who loves leather minis and spiked heels. I need someone to talk to and help me learn more about this. Call if you are sincere and want to help.

Unacceptable Example

This is Roxy and I'm looking for a real stud to show me a hot time in the bedroom. My mouth is hot, wet and hungry for a real man. If you want a TV-slut, I'm your whore. Call me...

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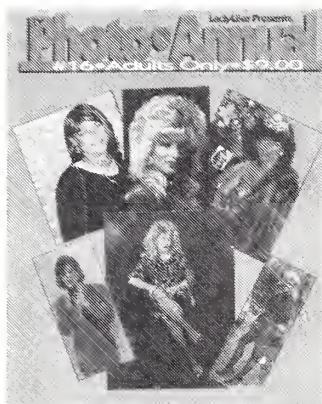


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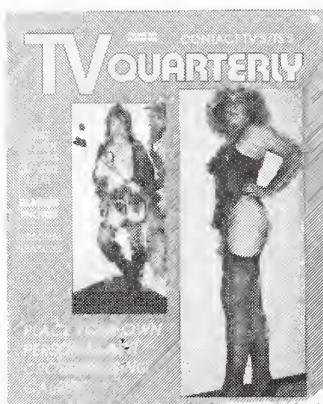


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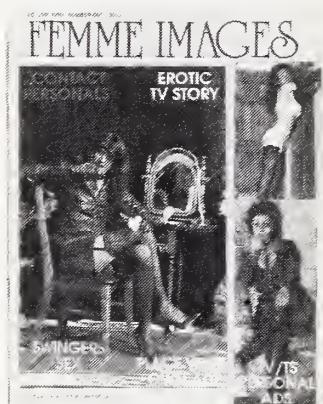
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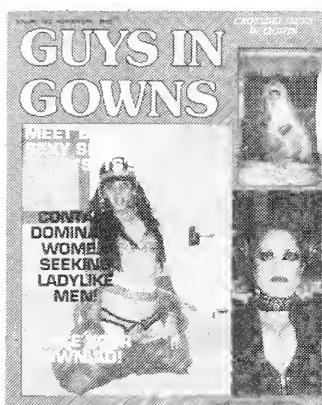
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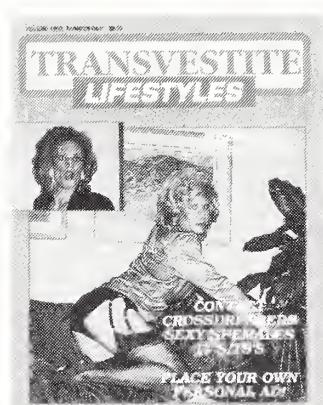
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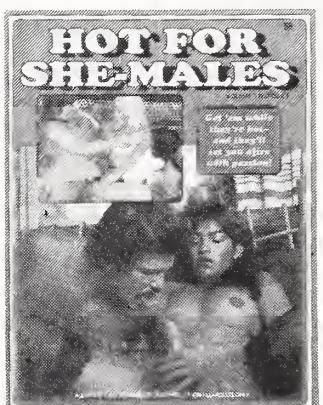
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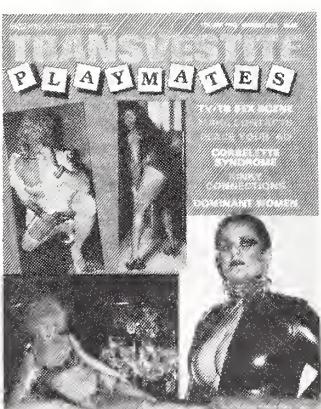
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